

**Plans Required to be Designed
by an Architect or Engineer**

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All plans are required to be signed by a California Registered Engineer or Architect except as follows:

1. Section 5537 of the California Business & Professions Code:

Exemption per Section 5537 of the Business & Professions codes are applicable to building plans that have been designed in accordance with the conventional framing requirements of Chapter 23 of the 1997 edition of Uniform Building Code and tables of limitation for wood frame construction.

An unlicensed person may prepare plans, drawings or specifications for the following:

- Single family dwelling not more than two stories and basement in height.
- Multiple dwellings containing no more than four dwelling units and not more than two stories and basement in height. Also, maximum of four dwelling units on any lot.
- Garages or other structures appurtenant to single family dwelling or multiple dwellings not more than two stories and basement in height.
- Agricultural and ranch buildings unless the building official deems that an undue risk to the public health, safety, or welfare is involved.

However, if any portion of any structure exempted by this section deviates from conventional framing requirements for wood frame construction found in Chapter 23 of the 1997 edition of the Uniform Building Code or tables of limitation for wood frame construction, the building official may require the preparation of plans, drawings, specifications or calculations for that portion by, or under the direct supervision of, a registered engineer or architect. The documents for that portion shall bear the stamp and signature of the licensee who is responsible for their preparation.

2. Section 5538 of the California Business & Professions Code:

This chapter does not prohibit any person from furnishing plans for any of the following:

- Nonstructural store fronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinet work, furniture, or other appliances or equipment.
- Any non-structural works necessary to provide for their installation.

However, an unlicensed person may not prepare plans for those alterations that will change or affect any components of the structural system or safety of the building or its occupants.

Plans prepared for the following works except as specifically noted above, shall be deemed as affecting the safety of a building or its occupants and shall be stamped and signed by a registered engineer or architect:

- New buildings, additions to existing buildings
- Projects with interior or exterior structural alterations
- Interior alteration with an occupancy change
- Interior alteration with walls and partitions over 5'9" in height or ceiling work which cover a floor area greater than 3,000 square feet in B, F-1, F-2, S-1, S-2 and M occupancies
- Storage racks over 8' in height
- Remodeling projects with changes to 1-hr rated corridors, fire rated occupancy separations, area separation walls
- Alteration with changes to exiting requirements
- Hazardous occupancies H1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 7
- Assembly occupancies: A1, 2, 2.1, 3, and 4
- Tanks and vessels
- Machinery and equipment requiring design per Section 1632 of UBC 97
- Roof mounted mechanical equipment
- School and day care occupancies E1, E2 and E3
- Hospital occupancies I1.1, I1.2, I2, and I3
- Projects with S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4, S-5 and S-6 occupancies
- Hotel, motel and apartment occupancies R-1
- Projects with mixed occupancies
- Remodeling projects in a high-rise (having floors over 75' in height) building
- Lateral force resisting systems utilizing poles embedded in the ground
- Cripple walls exceeding 4' in height or adjacent to garage door openings
- Any project deemed by Building Official to require professional design by a California Registered Engineer or Architect

Additional information can be obtained by visiting our website at www.sanjoseca/building/ or by calling our Information Inspector's voice mail at (408) 535-3555 and leaving a detailed message. In addition you may visit the Building Division in City Hall at 200 East Santa Clara St, San Jose CA 95113-1905.